

REMARKS

Claims 2-7 and 9-22 remain pending. Claims 10, 11, 14-17 and 22 are allowed. Claims 3-7, 12, 13 and 18-21 are rejected.

Claims 12 and 19 and the claims which depend therefrom were rejected under 35 USC 112, par. 2, based on the expression “which decorative surface has an appearance that corresponds to an environment that the interchangeable display system simulates”. The examiner stated it was unclear to him how the surface was decorated, and that the “environment” was undefined. The affected part of claim 12 now reads:

... which decorative surface has a design thereon that corresponds to a miniature environment that the interchangeable display system simulates

The claims are to be read in light of the specification. As the specification makes clear, the invention creates a miniature display. The detailed description focuses on a doll house where the walls of the doll house are decorated, such as with a “variety of decorative surfaces” (specification page 2). The nature of the surface is that it bears a design that portrays some aspect of the miniature environment, for example, “wallpaper, a mural, outdoor scenery or similar decor (p. 6). The design can also include “representations of windows, doors, paintings, shelves, and similar objects” (p. 6). Other examples include “an outdoor or garden type display” (p.8) and themes as varied as “the inside of a log cabin or the control room of a space ship” (p.9). Given this wide variety of possible designs, broad claim terminology is appropriate, as long as it is understood to relate to a *miniature* environment. Claim 12 is therefore believed to define definite subject matter within the meaning of 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

The examiner also applied Sauder U.S. Patent No. 3,975,876 in rejecting claims 12 and

19, from which the other rejected claims depend. Sauder describes a wood frame building wall that is full size (not miniature) and not described as decorated in any specific way. This really has nothing to do with the present invention, which is concerned with a display system which is by nature a kit for making a temporary display, not a permanent structure. It is not understood why the rejection was applied against claim 18, which recites that the environment was *miniature* interior building decor. Decor means “the style and layout of interior furnishings” (Websters). Sauder concerns a full size device, apparently undecorated, and cannot anticipate claim 18 as previously presented, or claim 12 as now amended. Similarly, claim 21 requires that the wall panels “simulate *in miniature* adjacent walls of an interior room. Neither of these limitations read on blank panels, which would not simulate anything. There must be a design recognizable as an attempt to simulate a larger item in miniature, consistent with the nature of the invention as a display.

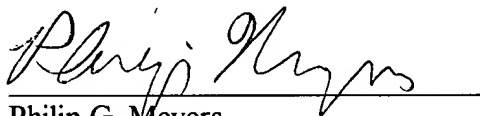
Regarding claim 19, this claim now defines first and second designs which “cooperate to depict a predetermined miniature environment.” This corresponds to the description at pages 8-9 of the specification, wherein the designs are miniature wall paper or the like. As one skilled in the art would understand, the panels each bear different designs but such are “matching or coordinated” as needed to fit a common theme. This claim as amended is sufficiently definite within the meaning of 35 USC 112, second paragraph. The Federal Circuit has recognized that the claims need only reasonably apprise those skilled in the art as to their scope and be as precise as the subject matter permits to satisfy 35 USC 112. Hybritech Inc. v. Monoclonal Antibodies, Inc., 231 USPQ 81 (Fed. Cir. 1986). The subject matter in this instance can take many forms, and as such it is necessary to use words such as “environment” in the claims, but this is not reason

of itself to reject such claims as indefinite. When read in the context of the specification, one of skill in the art will understand what claims 12 and 19 are directed to.

As to the rejection of claim 19 in view of Sauder based on 35 USC 102, this claim as amended distinguishes over Sauder, which does not concern a display system for showing an environment in miniature, and accordingly does not describe the use of wall panels with designs that cooperate to depict that environment. Accordingly, the rejection based on Sauder should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, applicants respectfully submit that the claims define patentable subject matter. A notice of allowance respecting all pending claims is, therefore, earnestly solicited. The examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number listed below if such would advance the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Philip G. Meyers", is written over a horizontal line.

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Appendix - claims with changes indicated:

12. (Twice Amended) An interchangeable panel display kit usable to make an interchangeable panel modular display system, which display system includes a frame including a base and at least one wall section positionable in an upright position when the base is placed horizontally on a surface, which wall section has grooves for slidably receiving a wall panel therein and an opening for inserting a wall panel into the grooves and for removing the wall panel from the grooves, and at least one wall panel slidably insertable into the grooves of the wall section, the wall panel comprising a support and a decorative surface disposed on at least one side of the support, which decorative surface has [an appearance] a design thereon that corresponds to [an] a miniature environment that the interchangeable display system simulates, wherein the kit comprises:

- at least one frame; and
- a plurality of interchangeable wall panels having a variety of decorative [surfaces] surface designs so that the appearance of the display system can be changed by removal and replacement of the wall panels.

19. An interchangeable panel display system, comprising:
a frame including a base, a first wall section positionable in an upright position when the base is placed horizontally on a surface, which first wall section has grooves for slidably receiving a wall panel therein and an opening for inserting a wall panel into the grooves and for removing the wall panel from the grooves, and a second wall section positionable in an upright position when the base is placed horizontally on a surface, which second wall section has grooves for slidably receiving a wall panel therein and an opening for inserting a wall panel into the grooves and for removing the wall panel from the grooves; and

- a first wall panel slidably insertable into and removable from the grooves of the first wall section, the first wall panel comprising a support having a first decorative surface disposed on at least one side of the support, which decorative surface has a first design thereon [an appearance that corresponds to an environment that the interchangeable display system simulates]; and

- a second wall panel slidably insertable into and removable from the grooves of the second wall section, the second wall panel comprising a support having a decorative surface disposed on at least one side of the support, which decorative surface has a second design thereon that [an appearance that corresponds to the environment that the interchangeable display system simulates but] is different from the first design, wherein the first and second designs cooperate to depict a predetermined miniature environment [decorative surface of the first wall panel].